



WOMEN'S BUREAU
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FACT SHEET

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Nothing in this document constitutes legal advice. The materials provided by the Women's Bureau are for informational purposes only and are not intended as a substitute for seeking legal advice.

Gender-Based Violence and Harassment in the World of Work

Everyone has a right to a world of work free from gender-based violence and harassment.

Women in the workforce are vital to the nation's economic security. The Women's Bureau raises awareness about policies and standards that safeguard the interests of working women; advocates for the equality and economic security of women and their families; and promotes quality work environments.



WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT?

- The term “gender-based violence and harassment” (GBVH) refers to a range of unacceptable behaviors and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim to, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm. In particular, the term references violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately and includes sexual harassment as defined in the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) [Convention on Violence and Harassment \(C190\)](#).

WHAT IS THE WORLD OF WORK?

- The phrase “world of work” broadens the scope of where work occurs. It refers not only to traditional workplaces, but anywhere workers are paid, take rest breaks, participate in work-related training or engage in work-related communications. As defined in ILO C190, the “world of work” refers to any space “in the course of, linked with or arising out of work.”

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK IS PERVERSIVE ACROSS ALL INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS.

- “GBVH in the world of work” means GBVH occurring in a variety of workplace contexts.
- GBVH may be experienced while:
 - Working with customers, such as in the restaurant and hospitality sectors;
 - Working in off-site or remote locations, such as on farms or in and around mines;
 - Taking breaks, such as in break rooms;
 - Communicating online, such as through email or social media;
 - Sleeping in an employer-provided space, such as in a fire station, worker dorms or remote work locations, or employer’s private home;
 - Working from a vehicle, such as truck drivers and ride share drivers;
 - Attending professional conferences or on-site visits; or
 - Performing work travel or remote work.
- GBVH, including domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, that takes place outside of the workplace context can also have spillover effects into the world of work, impacting general workplace safety and affecting a survivor’s work performance, attendance, or ability to find or maintain employment.



THE WOMEN'S BUREAU IS WORKING TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK.

- Established in 1920, the Women's Bureau is the only federal agency mandated to represent the needs of wage-earning women. For more than 100 years, we have been at the forefront of advocacy for working women. We accomplish our mission through a combination of research and policy analysis, grant making and education and outreach. Since our founding, the Women's Bureau has advocated for improved and safe working conditions for women in workplaces.
- "Safe working conditions" is not limited to safety from hazards such as chemicals and fires, it also means freedom from GBVH. GBVH is a primary barrier to accessing work and maintaining economic security for all workers, especially women workers, women of color, women with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ workers and immigrant women.
- GBVH is also a primary barrier to the recruitment and retention of workers. For example, [the EEOC reports](#) that discrimination and harassment push women to leave apprenticeship programs and keep women and people of color out of the construction industry.
- Ensuring that workers are free from violence and harassment, including GBVH, is at the core of creating safe, equitable and respectful workplaces.

HOW IS THE WOMEN'S BUREAU LEADING EFFORTS TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK?

[U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#)

- In May 2023, the White House released the first-ever U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. The plan lays out a roadmap for a whole-of-government effort to prevent and address gender-based violence in the United States. It specifically acknowledges that gender-based violence negatively impacts survivors' and workers' safety and economic security.
- The Women's Bureau is working alongside federal partners to implement the actions outlined in the National Plan.

[Fostering Access, Rights and Equity \(FARE\) Grant Program](#)

- The 2023 FARE Grant Program is the first U.S. Department of Labor grant program solely dedicated to supporting efforts of community organizations to prevent and respond to GBVH in the world of work.

[Collaboration with the International Labour Organization Office \(ILO\) for the United States and Canada](#)

- ILO Convention 190 is the first international treaty to recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including GBVH.
- The Women's Bureau and the ILO Office for the U.S. and Canada are engaging with workers, employers, unions, advocates and survivors through a series of regional convenings to uplift the principles of ILO C190 in the U.S., discuss industry best practices to prevent and respond to GBVH in the world of work and support survivors.

Interested in collaborating on efforts to end GBVH in the world of work?

Visit the Women's Bureau's website to learn more:

dol.gov/agencies/wb/topics/GBVH

